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Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture Office of Public Affairs Radio-TV Division Washington, D.C. 20250-1340 (202) 720-4330

Letter No. 2622

August 6, 1993

Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, Rep. Kika de la Garza, Under Secretary Eugene Moos, Secretary Mike Espy, and other officials of U.S. agriculture spoke at an Ag for NAFTA meeting, and the Farm Income and Ag Policy Forum, conducted at USDA. In his address to the Forum, Espy said that modern agriculture must have solid domestic farm and international policies that best focus resources to increase farm income and benefit agriculture. USDA photo by Bob Nichols.



DROUGHT TOUR -- Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Richard Rominger, at the direction of Secretary Espy, toured drought regions in North Carolina and Georgia to assess losses and to review agricultural programs. Rominger viewed damage to corn, soybean, tobacco and vegetable crops caused by hot, dry conditions in the states. **Contact: Tom Amontree (202) 720-4623.**

MEAT PLANT INSPECTIONS -- As part of the effort to improve and reform meat inspection, Assistant Secretary of Agriculture Eugene Branstool is visiting meat plants throughout the nation. Branstool oversees the Marketing and Inspection Services at the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which has been charged by Secretary Mike Espy to update the meat inspection system. Branstool has recently completed tours in Pennsylvania and Nebraska to help develop new meat inspection standards to better ensure food safety. **Contact: Mary Dixon (202) 720-4623.**

SOME GAINS, SOME LOSSES -- Texas remains the state with the most farms, 185,000, up 2,000 from a year ago. Missouri is second with 106,000 farms, down 1,000 from last year. Iowa has 100,000 farms, down 2,000. All other states had less than 100,000 farms. Alabama and Mississippi each gained 1,000 farms. Thirty-one states registered declines. **Dan Ledbury (202) 720-1790.**

REPLACING AGING FARM OPERATORS -- Many farm operators will reach retirement age in the coming decade, but fewer young people are entering farming to replace them. In 1987, the last census year, 45 percent of farms were headed by individuals 55 years or older. Based on the current age distribution of farm operators and historical rates of entry and exit by age group, farm numbers are projected to decline from today's 2.1 million farms to between 1.9 to 1.6 million by the year 2002. USDA estimates that more than 500,000 farmers will retire over the next decade, and will be replaced by about 350,000 younger entrants. High capital requirements and difficulties obtaining credit prevent young persons with little equity from entering farming. Thus the land and other assets of retiring farmers are often consolidated into existing farms, rather than being sold or rented to new entrants, reinforcing the trend to fewer and larger farms. **Contact: Fred Gale (202) 219-0525.**

FLOOD TOLERANT SOYBEANS -- Soybeans have been found in China that have tolerance to flood conditions. A scientist with USDA's Agricultural Research Service is using a gene mapping technique to help plant breeders develop flood-hardy soybeans in this country. The trait is critical for producers planting in areas vulnerable to floodwaters in the midwest. Severe flooding can cause high yield losses. The research will also aid soybeans geneticists seeking to map genes controlling other desirable traits. Similar research is also underway on corn. **Contact: Tara Van Toai (614) 292-9806.**

LOST & STOLEN PETS -- The time that animal pounds and shelters must hold dogs and cats has been extended from three to five days. The additional time and new regulations gives pet owners more time to search for their pets at dealers who sell animals to researchers. USDA amendments to Animal Welfare Act regulations also require dealers to produce written certification that the holding period has been met, and that the dealer has notified the pound or shelter that the animal may be used for research. The certificates will enable dogs and cats to be traced to their destination. Previously, holding periods were set by individual shelter operators, state or local governments. The new regulations go into effect August 23. **Contact: Cynthia Eck (202) 436-5931.**

HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAM -- USDA has awarded 23 challenge grants totaling \$1.5 million to 18 colleges and universities. The grants are part of USDA's Higher Education Challenge Grants Program. The grants are designed to improve higher education in the food and agricultural sciences. They will fund projects in curriculum design and materials development, faculty preparation for teaching, instructional delivery systems, and students learning through experience. The program is administered by USDA's Cooperative State Research System. **Contact: Len Carey (202) 401-4268.**

COMMUNITY SERVICE GRANTS -- USDA has helped obtain more than \$1.6 million in funding for five community volunteer projects in four states, Kansas, Michigan, Missouri and New Mexico. The grants from the Commission on National and Community Service will provide a significant boost for community service efforts. The Extension Service in Topeka, KS will receive \$800,000 to develop a national service model for medical and health services in rural areas. In Michigan, the Lapeer County school system will receive a one-year grant of \$13,200 for a project targeting at risk youth who are struggling in school. The University of Missouri Extension Service will receive \$800,000 in funds to further administer the service learning component of the National Community Service Act. In New Mexico, an Extension-led project in Portales will receive \$29,000 to help train high school youth to work with children ages 5-8. **Contact: Charles Morgan (202) 690-3656.**

HARVEST DELAYED -- Over half the sweet corn, snap beans and green pea crops used for processing have been delayed in harvest by heavy rains and slow development. Farmers in Minnesota, Illinois and Wisconsin produce 54 percent of the three crops. Retail prices for processed vegetables may increase during the second half of the 1993/94 crop season as output falls and supply tightens. During the severe Midwest drought of 1988 the retail price index rose 5 percent as processing vegetable output was cut 17 percent. Changes in prices and output this year are not expected to be as large. **Gary Lucier (202) 219-0884.**

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1887 -- Maria Bynum reports on actions dairy farmers are taking to prevent barnyard runoff from polluting nearby streams. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME #1369 -- Raising children; lawn fertilizer and water quality; low input landscaping; fakey food ads; challenges to supermarkets. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

AGRITAPE NEWS & FEATURES #1879 -- USDA News Highlights; farm income; vegetable production; floriculture and nursery industries turn to IPM; pesticide recordkeeping. (Weekly reel of news features.)

NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1632 -- Soybeans resist bean beetle; outside ant control; bacteria control dry rot; biocontrol advantages; electric pyramids zap flies. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Monday, August 16, milk production; Tuesday, August 17, crop & weather update, cranberries, farm labor; Wednesday, August 18, fruit/nut outlook; Thursday, August 19, mushrooms, ag outlook; Friday, August 20, cattle on feed, feed outlook, livestock & poultry update. **These are the USDA reports we know about in advance. Our Newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup. Please don't let the lack of a story listing keep you from calling.**

USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359, COMREX ENCODED (202) 720-2545.
Material changed at 5 p.m., EDT, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

FEATURES -- Pat O'Leary reports on SCS and the Boy Scout Jamboree. Scott Huffman, Mississippi State University, reports on a new vegetable demonstration project.

ACTUALITIES -- Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy at USDA's Farm Income Forum; USDA meteorologist Bob Stefanski on the weather and crop situation; USDA economist Janet Livezey on the rice outlook; USDA economist Scott Sanford on oil crops outlook; USDA economist Lewrene Glaser on industrial uses of agricultural materials.

UPCOMING FEATURES -- DeBoria Janifer reports on an Agriculture In The Classroom workshop; Pat O'Leary reports on pesticide recordkeeping; Lynn Wyvill reports on "spaceboard," a product made from recycled paper and wood that is used in creating packaging and construction materials.

EVERY OTHER WEEK -- Agriculture Update with anchors Eric Parsons and Lori Spiczka. 4:30 of USDA farm program information in news desk format with B-roll.

Available on Satellite Galaxy 6, channel 23, audio 6.2 or 6.8, downlink frequency 4160 MHz.: Thursdays from 7:30 - 7:45 p.m., EDT, Saturdays from 10 - 10:30 a.m., EDT, and Mondays from 8 - 8:30 a.m., EDT.

OFFMIKE

YOU KNOW ITS GOOD...when a complaining farmer can't be found, says **Gary Truitt** (AgriAmerica Network, Indianapolis, IN). Producers are experiencing the rare combination of beautiful crops and good prices. Gary says the network's new promotional program is a hit. Brass belt buckels with the network name and local station call letters inscribed are presented in the county fair auction ring to 4-H kids who have top winning animals.

PROGRESS...on the farm relief package in Congress is being closely watched by producers, says **Kevin Morse** (WOC, Davenport, IA). Latest figures from the state capital indicate \$2.9 billion in damage within Iowa. Cleanup is underway. Although it is past the normal period for soybean planting, some producers are taking a chance that they can get a crop out before frost. For others needing soil tests there will be no fieldwork performed until next year.

THANKS...to **Lynn Ketelsen** (Linder Farm Network, Willmar, MN) for stopping by while in the nation's capital as a member of a delegation of Minnesota farm officials. Lynn presented to Secretary Espy a number of questions resulting from his live call-in program.

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STATE AG DEPARTMENT...lists \$700 million damage from flooding in Missouri, says **Cindy Zimmerman** (Brownfield Network, Jefferson City, MO). The water treatment plant serving St. Joseph was inundated with flood water. Cindy says producers plan to use irrigation equipment to apply fertilizer. **Dick Marshall** says he's looking to add an experienced farm broadcaster to the network. The individual will serve with three other producers on the network. Resumes to the Brownfield network at P.O. Box 104180, Jefferson City, MO 65110-4180.

SUNSHINE...is so welcome, says **Susan Risinger** (WJAG, Norfolk, NE). It was the 2nd wettest July on record, the ground is saturated. Everything is behind, and an early frost is predicted. **Rich Garvin**, mentioned in the last issue, has left broadcasting and is in a fertilizer business.

ITS DRY...and irrigation is being run to cool plants even with local showers arriving on a spotty basis, says **Bob Wade** (Progressive Farmer Network, Starkville, MS). Feedback from producers indicates that they are ready to move from NAFTA to other issues.

VIC POWELL 
Chief, Radio & TV Division